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STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR HIS WEEKLY RADIO
BROADCAST OF APRIL 25-26, 1959 (RECORDED APRIL 23, 1959).

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

The big issue before the Senate this week has been the Kennedy-Ervin Labor Reform Bill. Labor reform was initially inspired several years ago/as stories began to leak out from all sections of the nation/of abuses within the unions. The organized labor movement had grown to such proportions/that its national leaders found within their grasps power and wealth/far greater than ever envisioned by many of the early proponents of legislation /designed to promote the collective bargaining movement.

Rather than hastily rewrite the labor laws to correct obvious injustices by big union bosses, the Senate set up in February of 1957/a select committee on improper activities in the labor or management field. During the past two years, this committee (popularly known as the McClellan Committee for its chairman, Senator John McClellan of Arkansas)/has investigated injustices within labor. Management has also been investigated. You have read and heard stories of the committee's findings. These revelations have been shocking.

There were cases of union bosses stealing from the union treasury/into which dues-paying union members contributed weekly; there were incidents of conspiracy between union bosses and corrupt employers/at the expense of dues-paying union members; there were disclosures of blackmail, threats on the lives of

union and non-union members alike, bombings of homes/and countless other improper activities.

The general consensus of opinion has been -- how could these injustices to union members and crimes against the public/be allowed to occur in a country like the United States? Why cannot such characters as Jimmy Hoffa be brought to justice?

The lack of adequate laws/and complacency on the part of the American public/constitute the real answer. While shocked by McClellan Committee findings, many voters have not exercised their right to attend political party precinct meetings, to insist that their party candidate take action to curb union abuses if elected, or, in many instances even to vote. Big union bosses, on the other hand, have organized thousands of union members into effective political precinct workers and are contributing directly (or indirectly) millions of dollars annually into the campaigns of candidates sympathetic to the views of the bosses. Recipients of union funds/dare not oppose union bosses/on issues dear to the union bosses' hearts.

In spite of the great power of these bosses, the disclosures made by the McClellan Committee in recent months/have stirred public opinion to such an extent/that it has been agreed by almost everyone/that some manner of labor reform is needed. Union bosses realize that public opinion makes this mandatory; however, they want a reform bill in name only/and not one to curb any of their powers achieved at the expense of the workingman and the public.

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Their desires have been conveyed to "presidential aspirants" within the Senate, men who fear that the White House is not within their reach without the support of the union leaders. The result has been a toothless labor reform bill.

Senator McClellan has become so aroused by the apparent inclination of most Senators to pass a milk-toast labor reform bill/ that he spoke for ^{about} three hours on Wednesday on behalf of an amendment to the Kennedy-Ervin Bill. He called this amendment a "Labor Bill of Rights." His impassioned speech, bringing attention to his committee's findings, helped influence enough Senators to join us/ ~~and most of the other Southern Democrats to pass~~ ^{in passing} this Bill of Rights for the workingman/ by a one-vote margin.

The struggle for a true and effective labor reform bill in 1959/ is still underway. I shall do all in my power/ to give the dues-paying union members of South Carolina/ protection against big union bosses/ and their arbitrary policies/ and at the same time continue to fight for the right of the workingman in South Carolina to join, or not to join, any union/ without any recriminations from organized labor or management.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.